



Division of Agriculture Activities

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<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag>

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Questions or Comments? [E-Mail](#) me or call 907-761-3858.



Note From the Director

Well, it appears that spring might finally be here! My truck thermometer read a balmy 61 degrees driving home from work last night, and I heard a report from a Fairbank's producer that their high today was 67. This time of year we all remember why we live here!

April is not only tax month, but also the closeout of Alaska's Legislative Session. This year the 90th day of the session was April 18th and at closeout the Legislature's final budget was transmitted to the Governor's office. Departments/Divisions came to work the following Monday anxious to see the outcome of the final days.

This year the Division of Agriculture did well. Our base budget was fully supported and the following requests were included in the Governor's budget and approved by the Legislature:

-\$200,000 for continued funding of the Certified Potato Seed Program at the PMC

-One new position to cover Timber exports. The Division of Agriculture, in cooperation with USDA provides this service to the timber industry enabling the continued export of logs to Asia.

\$520,000 for capital improvements at the PMC

The following bill was passed by the Legislature and impacts the Divisions:

HB70, which enacts a Farm to School Program within DNR was introduced by Representative Gatto. It was first heard last session and then stalled, but this session it flew through both the House and Senate during the final two weeks. This program has been proposed in several states and its intent is to strengthen links between state agriculture and state food procurement in schools, expand local markets, improve nutrition and educate our youth on the benefits of eating local. It will require the Governor's signature before it becomes law.

Overall, it was a good session and I want to thank the Administration and the legislators for their continued support of Alaskan Agriculture.

Franci

Calendar Events—

- Specialty Crop Competitive Grant Due May 15th
- Teachers Scholarship Grant Open Now! Due August 31st, 2010
- Food Policy Council Meeting May 18-19, Anchorage
- **Food and Farm Products Directory Forms Due: May 21, 2010!**



Marketing Section

Teachers Scholarship Program

We are announcing the Alaska Teachers Scholarship Program "Grant." It is available for all teachers in Alaska. Funding is a result of the successful USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) proposal submitted by the Division of Agriculture.

Eligible *specialty crops* include fruits, vegetables, and nursery crops including floriculture. Your projects must focus on eligible Alaska Grown specialty crops. Crops that **DO NOT** qualify as specialty crops under the federal agreement are: feed crops (such as barley, corn, hay, oats) livestock, dairy products, eggs and aquaculture products.

Scholarship amounts for the ATSP are up to \$500 each. Applicants will be eligible for up to 50% of the scholarship amount (\$250) up front. After the final report is turned in, the remaining 50% (\$250) will be paid out to awarded recipients. Contracts will be made with the teachers directly, and will not go through the school districts. Because the funding amount is under \$600 you will not have to report this as personal income.

The purpose of the ATSP is to introduce or expand agricultural in your curriculum. Scholarship funding can be used to purchase: books, videos, supplies, transportation to participate in a farm tour, etc. Teachers can apply independently for scholarships or teachers can collaborate with one another on their projects. If teachers do apply for a "group" project, each will still be responsible to complete an application and final report. This scholarship program is open to home schooling teachers. If you home school, and only have a few children, you can partner with other teachers to reach the minimum number of 20 students/ project. There is an exception for villages, where only a minimum of 10 students must be met. For village schools the scholarship amount is \$300 per 10 students.

Requirements of the contracts will include:

Contracting directly with teachers, not with the school districts. Minimum number of 20 students reached (for each \$500 grant) through the curriculum utilized.

Maximum of three teachers collaborating per project (for a total of \$1500 and minimum of 60 students reached).

Village schools must reach 10 students per \$300 scholarship. Collaborating with other villages is approved and encouraged.

Maximum of three teachers collaborating per project (for a total of \$900 per project and minimum of 30 students reached).

Documenting how you tracked results to demonstrate that students have a better understanding of agriculture.

A list of items purchased with receipts.

Conducting two surveys, one prior to and one following the implementation of the project, to gauge students' knowledge of agriculture.

Applicants should submit proposals using the proposal requirements supplied. Please review the application information **carefully**. The application, evaluation methods, sample proposal and budget sheet can be found online. Click [here](#) to access it.

As a reminder, the [Specialty Crop Competitive Grant](#) is due on May 14th. If you have any questions regarding this grant, please feel free to contact Patricia. Also, if you would like to be in the **printed** Food and Farm Products Directory, your form must be turned in by May 21st. The online version is updated year-round, and you can be added to that at any time. Thank you to all who have promptly returned them!

Marketing Staff

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Land Sales & Grazing Leases

The Port MacKenzie Rail Extension is a proposed extension of the Alaska Railroad; connecting Port MacKenzie to the main line railroad somewhere between Western Wasilla and Northern Willow. Two routes just north of the port run adjacent to or on portions of the Point MacKenzie Agricultural Project. The Port MacKenzie Rail Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) opened for public review and comment on March 26, 2010 with comments due by May 10, 2010. Comments will be used to prepare a Final EIS. The Final EIS will weigh the various benefits, impacts, and proposed mitigations to identify one or more preferred routes. Make your concerns known now so they can be addressed in the subsequent planning process.

The Draft EIS has identified: Mac East, Mac West, Connector 1, and Connector 2 as possible routes that would affect the Point MacKenzie Agricultural Project. The following Table is from the Draft EIS and provides a summary of potential land use impacts:

	Mac West-Conn 1-Willow	Mac West-Conn 1-Houston-North	Mac West-Conn 1-Houston-South	Mac West-Conn 2-Big Lake	Mac East-Conn 3-Willow	Mac East-Conn 3-Houston-North	Mac East-Conn 3-Houston-South	Mac East-Big Lake
Land Use	244 acres private land	210 acres private land	317 acres private land	487 acres private land	262 acres private land	228 acres private land	335 acres private land	422 acres private land
	Structures in the 200-foot ROW: 0	Structures in the 200-foot ROW: 0	Structures in the 200-foot ROW: 0	Structures in the 200-foot ROW: 20 displaced most of which are residences	Structures in the 200-foot ROW: 3 (1 residence)	Structures in the 200-foot ROW: 3 (1 residence)	Structures in the 200-foot ROW: 3 (1 residence)	Structures in the 200-foot ROW: 21 displaced most of which are residences
	Acres in agricultural use lost: 66	Acres in agricultural use lost: 64	Acres in agricultural use lost: 64	Acres in agricultural use lost: 94	Acres in agricultural use lost: 94	Acres in agricultural use lost: 7	Acres in agricultural use lost: 5	Acres in agricultural use lost: 5
	Official trails crossed: 11	Official trails crossed: 8	Official trails crossed: 8	Official trails crossed: 6	Official trails crossed: 8	Official trails crossed: 4	Official trails crossed: 4	Official trails crossed: 5
	4 state recreation or refuge areas crossed	2 state recreation or refuge areas crossed	2 state recreation or refuge areas crossed	1 state recreation or refuge area crossed	4 state recreation or refuge areas crossed	1 state recreation or refuge area crossed	0 state recreation or refuge area crossed	0 state recreation or refuge areas crossed
	Adverse noise impact to 2,765 acres of Section 4(f) properties	Adverse noise impact to 2,258 acres of Section 4(f) properties	Adverse noise impact to 1,489 acres of Section 4(f) properties	Adverse noise impact to 992 acres of Section 4(f) properties	Adverse noise impact to 1,276 acres of Section 4(f) properties	Adverse noise impact to 769 acres of Section 4(f) properties	Adverse noise impact to 0 acres of Section 4(f) properties	Adverse noise impact to 0 acres of Section 4(f) properties

Land Sales & Grazing Leases
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The Draft EIS goes into much greater detail than this newsletter possibly could. Anyone with an interest in Alaskan agriculture can go [here](#) for an electronic copy of the Draft EIS.

The Susitna Matanuska Area Plan public comment period has been extended to **June 4th, 2010**. This area plan sets management goals and places land use classifications upon state lands in the Mat-Su area. Of the 8.8 million acres of state land, roughly 60,000 acres are being considered for agricultural classification. An additional public meeting has been scheduled to be held on **Monday, May 3** from 6-9 pm at the Mat-Su Legislative Information Office in Wasilla at 600 E. Railroad Ave. Following a presentation on the draft plan there will be an opportunity for the public to comment on the plan. Please follow this [link](#) to see the public review draft of this plan.



Inspection Section

Potato Sprouts



It is inevitable, potatoes start 'waking up' this time of year. So, if I am selling potatoes as US No 1 or US No 2 grade what are the tolerances for sprouting potatoes? Two changes to the standard have occurred which affects the allowances for the length of the sprout as well as how you to apply it to the total percentage of defects.

Here is a breakdown of the previous, revised and current standard:

Old standard	Revised April 2008	Current November 2008
US No 1: When more than 10 percent of the potatoes in any lot have any sprout more than 3/4 inch in length or have individual sprouts or cluster of sprouts which materially detract from the appearance of the potato.	US No 1: Not more than 5 percent of the potatoes in a lot may have individual or clusters of sprouts not more than 1/4 inch at shipping point and 1/2 inch at destination. US No 2: Not more than 10 percent of the potatoes in a lot may have an individual clusters of sprouts not more than 1/2 inch at shipping point and 1 inch at destination.	US No 1: When more than 5 percent of the potatoes in a lot have sprouts in clusters or any individual sprout more than 1/4 inch in length at shipping point and 1/2 inch in length at destination. US No 2: When more than 10 percent of the potatoes in a lot have sprouts in clusters or any individual sprout more than 1/2 inch in length at shipping point and 1 inch in length at destination.

Here is an image of the maximum allowance for a US No 1 Potato. 5% of the lot can have more than this before it is scored against the grade and still meet US No 1. For example, if I have 10% total sprouting only 5% would be scored for sprouting.

Inspection Staff

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SPROUTS, CLUSTERS



U.S. No. 1 - maximum allowed